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SOURCE Chieh-fang Jih-pao.DISCUSSES FAMINE CONDITIONS

EDITOR ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMINE -- Shanghai Chieh-fang Jih-pao, 13 Apr 50

Questions:

1. We know that during the period of reactionary KMT rule there were famines year after year. Is the present famine more or less severe? Why?
2. Some say the present famine cannot entirely be called a "Chiang famine." I think another important reason is the burden of taxes borne by the farmer. Is this correct? Why?
3. Many consider the famine extremely serious, saying it will not only devastate the rural areas, but also will affect industry and commerce by augmenting their difficulties to the point that they cannot overcome them. Is this correct? Why?

Answers (by the editor):

1. China has suffered many famines in the past several decades, the most serious being in 1931. The present famine resulted from a variety of natural causes. Last autumn's great flood was more widespread and severe than that of 1931. In the Yellow River Valley, it exceeded any of the past years. Yet because of the relief work by the Party, the government, and the people, the famine is less severe. The continual famines in the past were more serious because the reactionary KMT government did not alleviate them, but aggravated them. Today with 10 million members of the people's government working with the people, instituting self-help and emergency relief, the famine has been checked. Hereafter these famines will not recur.

2. Everyone knows that past floods were due not only to natural causes, but also to imperialistic and bureaucratic exploitation. The only purpose of the government was to oppress and fleece the people rather than aid them by flood control or relief; and the very little relief given served only as another opportunity for graft. We call the present famine a "Chiang Imperialist Famine" because we are still suffering from the evil heritage of the Chiang

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imperialist period. As for the burden of war, it is clear that the bitterness of the struggle was caused by 6 billion US dollars worth of planes and artillery. To rid ourselves forever of the Chiang imperialist famines, it is necessary for the people's burden to be increased. Yet, despite the urgent necessities of war and the importance of liberating Taiwan, the government is not ignoring the plight of 10 million famine victims, but is exerting every effort to lead the people in overcoming it.

3. In the past, the rural economy was the basis of city commerce and industry, famine aggravated economic depression and commercial and industrial bankruptcy. Therefore, the disaster was not limited to several million deaths from starvation. Today, the government policy is not simply "not to let a single person starve" but also to restore agriculture, to encourage side occupations, and to organize the farmers.

LIN PIAO REPORTS ON FAMINE CONDITION -- Shanghai Chieh-fang Jih-pao, 13 Apr 50

The substance of the Lin Piao's report on famine conditions before the Central People's government, on 11 April 1950, follows:

"Famine victims total over 10 million; the seriously stricken number about 4,500,000. The areas affected include 171 hsien and two cities, Nan-ch'ang and Chiu-chiang. For natural seasonal reasons, famine victims have increased in certain areas.

"Before I left for Peiping, the Famine Relief Committee of the Military Administrative Council had just met. Grain loans throughout the affected areas total 286 million catties. According to incomplete data, seed loans amount to 66 million catties. The 100 million catties authorized by the Central People's government will be used where the need is greatest, but the greater part will be set aside for use at the time of summer famine. It is estimated that the spring famine can, on the whole, be tided over, but famine conditions must receive the most serious attention."

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